

Message Text

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70

ACTION SCCT-01

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 SCS-03 SCA-01 COME-00 EB-07

OPR-02 USSS-00 SY-05 FBIE-00 PPT-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /073 W
----- 048011

P 082103Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2289

C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 2685

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, VE

SUBJ: NIEHOUS KIDNAPPING

REF: A CARACAS 2421, B STATE 51948

1. EMBASSY OFFICERS MET WITH FRANK LYNCH, SECURITY OFFICER OF OWENS- ILLINOIS ON MAR 5 AND ON MARCH 8. OWENS-ILLINOIS HAS HIRED JOHN P LONGEN, A FORMER AID PUBLIC SAFETY ADVISER, AS A CONSULTANT TO HANDLE THE VENEZUELAN END OF THE KIDNAPPING. LYNCH WAS QUITE FIRM IN STATING THAT OWENS-ILLINOIS WILL NOT ACCEDE TO THE KIDNAPPERS' REQUEST FOR PUBLICATION OF THE COMMUNIQUE UNTIL THEY HAVE PROOF THAT THEY ARE DEALING WITH THE GROUP WHICH ACTUALLY HOLDS NIEHOUS. HIS EXACT WORDS WERE THAT THE COMPANY WAS "HANGING TOUGH ON THIS ONE."

2. WE ALSO HAVE AMPLE EVIDENCE THAT VENEZUELAN GOVT OFFICIALS WERE INSTRUMENTAL IN CONVINCING LOCAL EDITORS NOT TO PUBLISH THE MORE HARD-HITTING PORTIONS OF THE KIDNAPPERS' COMMUNIQUE. GOVT CONCERN REMAINS HIGH THAT DESPITE THE EVIDENT FORGERIES OF SOME OF THE ATTACHMENTS TO THE COMMUNIQUE, THE FULL PUBLICATION OF THE COMMUNIQUE WOULD BE EMBARRASSING TO THE GOV. IN VIEW OF THE OBVIOUSLY INTERNAL POLITICAL CONTENT OF THE COMMUNIQUE AND THE INCREASINGLY APPARENT DECISION OF
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THE VENEZUELAN AUTHORITIES TO ALSO "HANG TOUGH" ON THE

KIDNAPPING AS EVIDENCED BY VENEZUELAN PUBLIC STATEMENTS
(SEE CARACAS 2370, 2498, 2555), WE CONCLUDE THAT THE
GOV WILL NOT READILY ACCEDE TO THE PUBLICATION OF THE
COMMUNIQUE.

3. WE MAKE NO JUDGEMENTS CONCERNING THE ATTITUDES OF
EITHER THE OWENS-ILLINOIS COMPANY OR OF THE GOV AND
WE HAVE BEEN CAREFUL TO AVOID EITHER ADVISING THEM ON THIS
MATTER OR ENDORSING THEIR APPROACH. WE HAVE REMAINED
FIRMLY IN THE BACKGROUND. WE ARE CONCERNED HOWEVER
ABOUT THE MOMENT WHEN LEGITIMATE CONTACT IS RE-ESTABLISHED
WITH THE KIDNAPPERS. IF AN ULTIMATUM FOR PUBLICATION IS
RECEIVED, WE CANNOT EXPECT IT TO OCCUR AT AN HOUR
CONVENIENT TO NORMAL OPERATIONS OR WITH SUFFICIENT TIME
TO PERMIT AN OPPORTUNITY TO SEEK FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS.
WE THEREFORE REITERATE OUR REQUEST FOR BACK-UP
INSTRUCTIONS IN THE EVENT WE ARE ASKED TO INTERCEDE IN ORDER
TO SEEK PUBLICATION OF THE COMMUNIQUE IN THE FACE OF A
SHORT-FUSED ULTIMATUM FROM THE KIDNAPPERS.
SHLAUDEMAM

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